

# Roads and Highways Advisory Board Meeting Minutes January 17, 2023

**Meeting called to order by Chair, Dan Hall**

**Item 1: Roll call**

**Board Members present:** Dan Hall, Andrew Guy, Aves Thompson, Jon Fuglestad, Kodi Long

**Virtual:** Jason McComas-Roe

**Board Member absent:** Beth Fread, unexcused absence.

**DOT&PF:** Ryan Anderson, Commissioner, Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, James Marks, Program Development Director, Shannon McCarthy, Communications Director, Andy Mills, Legislative Liaison, Tammy Kramer, Carolyn Morehouse, Statewide Design & Engineering Services Director, Jocelyn Swindel, Administrative Officer, Tera Ollila, Administrative Assistant

**Item 2: Approve Agenda and meeting minutes:** Dan Hall – Meeting minutes approved from October 11, 2022

**Item 3: Chair’s remarks (Dan Hall):**

Thank you everybody for being here, I think our last meeting was very good. I think we learned a lot. As we spend more time with this advisory board we're getting good information and we are learning more. I appreciate everybody's effort and time.

**Board remarks**

**Kodi Long:** Nothing too exciting, just busy and doing infrastructure projects.

**Jon Fuglestad:** I'm glad to be here again, to be part of this group. I look forward to these meetings. And for us at Hecla, certainly we see a lot of good opportunities out here for the contracting community and everything else. A lot of different forms of contracting are coming to, so that's kind of an interesting take on things. Hopefully everything cooperates this year and everybody's successful.

**Andrew Guy:** I just got back from the YK region, and I drove on the ice road. It's up and running. It took a while to get thick enough for the trucks and cars to get on. But there's delivery trucks right now, so hopefully it'll go all the way up by the time winter hits.

**Jason McComas-Roe:** I really like that this is a part of our agenda. At this time I have nothing to report. Thank you.

**Item 5: Public Comment:** No comments from the public.

**Item 6: Project Scoring and Regulations (James Marks)**

**James Marks:** There has been a lot of high-level discussion that I've been having with my teams, a lot of engagement with the commissioner's office, Commissioner Anderson, and Deputy Commissioner Keith about how we go about making investment decisions. This is directly tied into some of those concepts that we've been talking about in the last couple of meetings about our planning regulations and how they're not only out of date, but in some instances hinder our ability to make the right decisions or don't produce the right portfolio of projects.



This slide talks about our family of plans and this is really where we've been focusing in on, trying to create those meaningful connections to the different levels of state authorities, not just a plan that gets produced and then put on a shelf. We're wrapping up our long-range transportation plan now. It went through a public comment period and we're making final revisions to that. Having that connect to a series of strategic investment plans where we can establish goals, policies, actions, and funding distributions. That should then feed into our tier three plans, which is our modal and system plans, where we have in our long-range plan or our national highways plan or some of these other things that would all then feed into regional plans and area plans.

## L RTP GOAL AREAS

### INVESTMENT AREAS

1. Safety
2. State of Good Repair
3. Economic Vitality
4. Resiliency
5. Sustainability

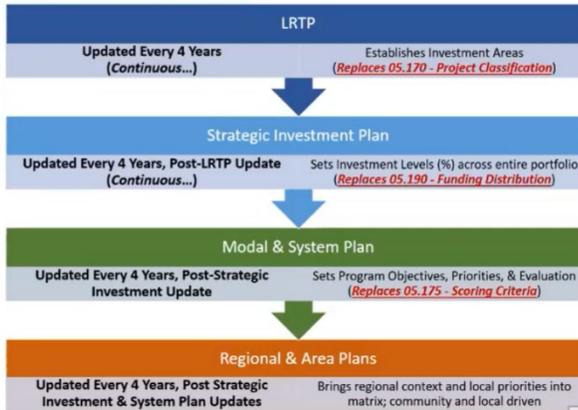
If you've been dialed in to the long-range transportation plan effort, you probably seen these coming forward as focus areas. These are going to be getting into what we have been starting to call our investment areas. Safety is our number one priority, state of good repair, economic vitality, making our systems and our infrastructure more resilient, resilient and sustainable. And that's really getting into a whole host of different areas, from electrification to making our areas just more sustainable.

### Major Areas of Regulatory Update

1. 17 AAC 05.170 – **Project Classification**
2. 17 AAC 05.175 – **Scoring Criteria**
3. 17 AAC 05.190 – **Funding Distribution**

These are the areas that we're focusing on is 17 AAC 05.170, 175 and 190. Those areas of our planning regulations are our project classification. It defines what our scoring criteria are, as well as funding distribution.

### Possible Model...



The model that's been starting to emerge as we've been talking through how to make all these things connect meaningfully and work together. The L RTP has those investment areas and really that as we're talking about a potential regulations package or an update to our authorities, that could be the right place to replace project classification.

Strategic investment plan which would be updated or prepared. We don't have one of these right now. Our first strategic investment plan would potentially be done once the L RTP is done where we could set an investment level. When we're talking about investment levels, it's really multi-modal, looking across all modes. Very often we get very highways centric, but in some areas there's more aviation investment because that's the right way

to get people in people and goods in and out of that area. Maybe that becomes the replacement for 05.190 where we can set certain investment levels.

The modal and system plans is where we would get into specifics. Where we would have a safety focus area. Ideally, we would have some form of safety plan that would get into what are the program objectives, what are the priorities for the state; and how do we evaluate those projects and getting into criteria.

All of that would then feed into those regional area plans where we bring in regional context, local priorities, community and local driven needs overlaid on top of all of this. One possible model to propose is that perhaps the regulations are about how we go about making these plans or how we go about soliciting input.

I just wanted to give you kind of an update on some of these high-level conversations that we've been having. I'm hoping that by the time we get to the next quarter's meeting, we'll have, I think, Aves and others had asked for potential model resolution language. I don't know if we'll be that far, but maybe some more information on what some of these specifics might look like, but happy to entertain any questions.

**Andrew Guy:** If you are confident that some areas should be focused on air transportation, I don't agree with that because of ANCSA. When ANCSA was passed, it was a contract between basically four parties, natives, oil companies, the state, and the feds. With the enactment of ANCSA, there were a lot of corporations formed. Village corporations are the ones that I'm thinking about. In order to have a viable business that's not only viable but growing and providing the kind of benefits that it's supposed to, there must be basic infrastructure in place, and air infrastructure has not worked. That's why we have so many village corporations teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. The only thing that kind of saves them is the seven-day provision of ANCSA. The state has really ignored the road infrastructure and railroad infrastructure out into rural Alaska. It needs to start doing that because it touches the economic viability, economic vitality, safety; all those factors that you mentioned. We cannot just accept that air is the only possible form of transportation that's available to rural Alaska. We have a road going all the way up to the North Slope, to Homer, all the way east to New York, and Florida. We must do something toward the toward the western part of the state. I hope that your work is also considering that kind of transportation expansion.

**Commissioner Anderson:** If this board was to look at these regulations and want to understand something like this, how we're investing in rural Alaska versus urban areas or the highway corridors, let's just say that would be the funding distribution, is that is that where they would look, James, in terms of the regs?

**James Marks:** The regs as they currently exist are distributed by program and it's very basic. It is national highways, Alaska highways, community transportation, and track, which doesn't exist anymore. My comments earlier about looking at all modes, wasn't necessarily saying that any one area would only get one particular mode. It was really the opposite. It's looking at everything so that we're looking at things holistically. Kind of to your point, Mr. Guy, is that we are looking at road infrastructure, and the aviation infrastructure, working with Alaska Railroad. In the in the YK area, there's been a lot of discussion about that YK connector and the corridor there and trying to connect resources. My comments were more about trying to get away from being just highways centric and looking at all modes when we are doing these evaluations. One potential new way of doing things is looking at investment areas. The other dimension that you don't see you didn't see on that is the distribution among geography. Urban, rural, corridor, waterways, some of these there's a lot of different ways to kind of slice and dice things. That's why we don't have a specific resolution for you to look at, because we want to look at all the different ways and then provide you something to look at.

**Chair Dan Hall:** This scoring to me is always interesting when you drive around and look at a road. For example, you drive from the end of the new project, the quality completed at Big Lake and the road is coming apart for the next 30 miles to from there to Willow. It seems like we're three or four years past the shave and pave or upgraded. How that scored or how that's evaluated is and how it falls in line with every other need, is probably a real conundrum to manage. It seems like with the use of that road, it would have been further up the priority list. That's just one example where I kind of get confused in this process of how it all kind of works, probably a very difficult matrix to understand because we keep talking about it.

**Commissioner Anderson:** If we create the investment areas and that everybody agrees, we've got to focus on safety and then state a good repair, and pavement jobs. For the pavement, we do have a transportation asset management plan now that's available that gives you that piece of it and how we're looking at pavement and how we're prioritizing it. That's probably one of our first that's a data driven type approach. Carolyn, do you want to explain HSIP?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** I'll start with that Highway safety improvement program that is data driven to look at based on safety accidents throughout the state. What can be done; what kind of projects to counter measure those individual accidents. If you have some angle accidents, you might think about putting it in a roundabout or a traffic signal even to be a safety improvement, of widened shoulders. The federal highways liked that because each step you see, okay, this happened, you look at the date afterwards, did we correct it, and then a big report on it. 2021 started the asset management for just pavement and bridges. Now we as states can go over that but we must start doing asset management on pavement bridges and that was 2012. We have a bridge management system; we have a pavement management system now. We will collect the data, analyze the data, look for different kind of recommendations for work types. If you're in an area that maybe it's gone too far, we're not going to just do an overlay because it needs something more. That's how we're trying to manage through asset management, different work types and we will use models to create buckets of money. We need this kind of reconstruction of pavement; we need this kind of preservation; and then general M&O. We have these in our asset management plan, and then we'll track the projects that go out based on the work type, based on what we said we needed, and show that, yes, we are we're investing as we need to meet a certain level, some roads were in it, and some roads are going to be poor.

**Chair Dan Hall:** How does that work, Carolyn, when you go from your system with the grading into this system where we're looking for funding? It sounds like there may be maybe disconnect there.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** I know when asset management started, we decided we're going to take everything we need for this program, we carved out we need this amount of money. While we are checking throughout, of course, we we're talking 2018, by the time we got everything, and we've been tracking it. So, we've been shown we do a lot of pavement projects. We do quite a bit of money and pavement, maybe not as much as bridge investment, as we said we're going to do some shifting. As the years went by, we did add more bridges, or they were being designed anyway. But what we do is we the work types that we have for preservation, each of the regions have a pot of money, their preservation pot. Between the segments of pavement that come out from this pavement management system. Talking to M&O and design at the Regions, we come up with lists. These are the proper preservation projects. There might be

a project coming the next year. We're not going to preserve it because we're going to reconstruct it next year. There's the back and forth between what comes out of the model and the pavement data and then the people in the field, we've been doing that since 2019, so it's a newish practice. It must go in the STIP in this larger discussion of these projects.

**James Marks:** A question I get often is; how does a project get into the STIP? Part of that is simplifying so we can tell our story, but also so we can better execute when we run a community transportation program. It takes the better part of 9 to 12 months to run through a CTP call for projects. The tarp and those are one mechanism for feeding into. Those are the data driven pieces. There are also things that are more data informed where we want professional judgment or subject matter experts or other data sources. Carolyn's right. We want to use data. We want to make good decisions. Also, we want to look back and say, did the data, did the program parameters, did all these things we put in place, what did they yield? If we got a big stretch of road that didn't get prioritized for one reason or another, where did the process fail and how do we do it better? That's where we need to get into these cyclical processes where we are continuously evaluating. I'll just put one more plug in there. I think we mentioned it last time, some of these efforts, an LRTP or an area plan, they're done every 4 to 5 years and so trying to dust them off and start again, it doesn't keep us very agile. One of the things that we're looking at with all these plans is, is can we make these plans continuous where we're always using them to inform, always making sure that they're relevant and working.

**Aves Thompson:** You were talking about the pavement management and HSIP. Are these competing for a fixed amount of money? Say that the pavement management for example. If you discover that that needs more than just fluff and brush, then does that then elevate that in the process toward a STIP project?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Right. In our opinion, the pavement management. We wouldn't be putting our preservation on things that need to be reconstructed. Yes, HSIP is a designated pot of money from federal highways. There's in our federal highway side, they went from 23 different types of projects. In 2012 they went to four. We have safety money, now we have IJJA. We have a few more programs, smart money, the congestion mitigation money, air quality, NHTP, which is the national highway system, and then SPR, which is not the national highway system. So those are the four buckets of money. Safety for HSIP has its own funding, but the other the pavement, the bridge, the expansion, that all was competing for the same dollars. So that's the investment strategies you'd have to come up with how to carve these out. Now with IJJA, we have more funds, we have the protect funds; we have different things in that one as well. We try to data driven in all our projects.

**Kodi Long:** Is the data Scored the same way as the other ones as far as safety, everything else, or how do you what is the data and how is that scored within that system?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** I will let James explain that one. But I did want to say this HSIP program is for kind of mitigation of accidents that are happening. We also we do safety improvements in our big projects. We'll do shoulders and we'll do all these things, add guardrail. That's not part of the HSIP that is part of the big NHS or STP pots. We do safety things within the other pots and money as well. And that's when it gets fun. So, I know that James has, and his staff have done a great job doing the state of good repair criteria, which has different criteria in it.

**Aves Thompson:** Would it be safe to say that the HSIP projects are more specific to a solving a problem, reactionary?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** They are, but we have done some, we do these kinds of programmatic. For example, we have this problem here, we have like problems and very similar other places. You can use HSIP for this kind of programmatic treatment as well. A bad traffic engineer joke how many people must die before you do something. It's not like that, we want to make sure that we are doing things if we show there's a trend in similar spots. I think the bulk of our safety, really a lot of our safety improvements are done in those larger STIP projects and they're not in the HSIP program.

**James Marks:** There's three different questions or maybe topics I want to touch on. So, on the criteria, that's where we're getting into. If we have these five different investment areas, at a minimum each one of those would have its own program objectives and criteria, maybe more than one set of criteria. Because on the safety side, we will have those data driven things where we're trying to mitigate serious injuries and death. There is also what they call

systemic safety projects where we know that a certain design is dangerous and we know that there's peer reviewed treatments to mitigate that.

To Aves point, on the funding distribution. We do get dedicated funds for safety. It varies between 60 and 70 million annually. But across our entire portfolio, there's a lot of additional safety funding, whether it's NHPP or STBG, some of these other things that that get routed towards improving the safety. That's were getting into that funding distributions across our entire portfolio becomes important, because it's not going to be federal program centric. It's going to be looking at what problem are we trying to solve and directing whatever funds we need to that problem on average. I think Deputy Commissioner Keith has some more detailed information on us later. About a third of our funding portfolio goes towards safety related projects between 30 and 40%. The other 30 some odd percent goes to state of good repair. We haven't historically, or at least in our current program, invested very well in things like sustainability and resiliency because those are new prevailing things that we're dealing with. Therefore, yes, many of these programs do compete for funding. That's why coming up with these distributions and having a clear and understandable methodology is important, that's the transparency piece that I'm really pushing for.

**Commissioner Anderson:** What role does the board want? I'm open to ideas. If you all think and I don't know, James, if we've ever looked at what other states are doing for how they support projects, because I know everyone's kind of in this world of different funding boxes and you're trying to match these things up. Other states probably have a lot more state money and there may be a little different thing going on there. However, the things we're looking at right now, we kind of have these strategic investment areas that are broad with the safety and the state of good repair. There's opportunities to weigh in in terms of how much should we be invested in each one of those areas. We do have constraints like with Fed highways. We have targets on pavement bridge that we must meet, or we get penalized. Same with safety, right on each HSIP program. We do have some of those kinds of constraints in regards to our regulations and scoring criteria and those kinds of things. I think, and James might argue with me on this, is that there's some flexibility and latitude there. If we decided, because these have been around for a long time, the world is changing, maybe there's a little bit of a different take we want to propose on that. It could be the way we do things with the Alaska Highway system and national highway system and whatnot. Mr. Guy's comments about how we are investing in rural projects. I do believe the push with IJA on equitable distribution of funding right now is a real thing. It may behoove us to at least have a way to describe what we're doing so that in that context when we get asked is like, Oh, we have this system and this is how we do it, because I don't think we're quite there yet right. James in terms of equitable distribution of funds and what that mean; and how that is even defined?

**James Marks:** The short answer to that is yes. The longer answer is coming up with shared definitions of what we're defining as equity. There's a lot of different maps and a lot of different ways of looking at things. There's this Justice 40 map that's out there, poverty maps and things that with track. I absolutely agree with you, that having a new and contemporary way of evaluating things, it really gets into the transparency of it. Engaging with Roads and Highways, with the Alaska Marine Highways Operations Board, and these other entities to solicit this type of information is going to be critical so that we can build something we can execute, makes a difference in the areas that we need to make a difference in and is easy to understand.

**Andrew Guy:** I'm looking forward to seeing the draft for the scoring. Federal funding comes in different ways, obviously comes to the state that we do our work here. It also comes through the tribes and the Denali Commission. I think the scoring should recognize that and have it inputted, because we work with the tribes and with the Denali Commission, the money can go a lot further in terms of expanding the road system, it can make it possible. For scoring you ought to think about adding that aspect of it.

The other ways that we're partnering with the other entities that receive those roads, transportation, The ice road is a marine highway system, because it's right on top of the river. It's no different than the southeast Marine Highway System. The river is used by a lot of the people and communities out there. It makes it cheaper, more accessible to a lot more folks to travel on. That's a good partnership that we've had for a long time. It is only run by the tribes and the municipalities for sometime in the past. Now the state and the Denali Commission is kind of joining into that effort.

**Aves Thompson:** Could that could there be some leveraging opportunities there between, say, the Denali Commission, DOT and tribes?

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think it needs to go a step further. Andrew, I think when you talk about building these rural schools and doing some of this, when you're doing a project, they all take gravel. There's only one way to get gravel there, and the more volume you have, the cheaper it gets by unit. And when you look at building sewer systems and schools and fuel systems, telecommunication, whatever it is, doing these little piece by piece. It gets very expensive. You know DOT gets they see MOAB cost to go in a lot of these projects. They're real dollars. We should maximize those dollars when we get an opportunity. It's not unusual for us to leave a job and then here comes the school contractor.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Project Bundling right now is a big topic, especially broadband, all these other funds. You're right. These funds come into the state and trying to tackle that is important. On ice Roads, I know it's not on the agenda, but there is a fair amount of progress to report. If James could report on that. I don't know if he's prepared, but we have been working hard on that, establishing that Ice Roads program.

**James Marks:** We have set to work developing that new what's being called the safe Ice Roads for All Alaska program. We ran a solicitation this last quarter and got quite a good amount, about 15 applications where we had an evaluation board that went through and looked at that. We wanted to figure out who is best equipped to evaluate these things. We got some names from the Commissioner and others, of people that either lived in the area or have worked on these areas on the ice roads to evaluate these projects. We've wrapped up awards and have awarded over \$2 million to those different communities. One native village for \$450,000, the Tanana Tribal Council for 32,000, and Crooked Creek Traditional Council for 60,000. One of the challenges with trying to get this money out as quickly as possible is limited time to really evaluate, because some of these projects were overlapping. We had multiple communities, for example, submitting for the Kuskokwim. So, we're going to have to work through some of these things in real time as we're developing. Right now, we're trying to wrap up these memorandums of agreement (MOAs), and the limited waiver of tribal sovereign immunity so that we can get these dollars to work. Very good progress. We did get a bit of a hiccup with the holidays and some of the communities' people were out on leave so weren't able to get as far on with some communities as we were with others. Very excited to get that program moving.

**Commissioner Anderson:** James and his crew and the ability to just take something and go do it, versus talk about it for a year, it was pretty neat and awesome. When we talk about projects and the timing, you must also talk about project delivery. When you look at how things are scheduled in the STIP, and in our capital budgets and everything, that project delivery factor is huge for us. And so just to recognize that too, that sometimes the way things are sequenced aren't necessarily because that was the way we wanted them to be sequenced. It was because there was a permitting situation or a resource situation and or other factors. That weighs in on us to. Of course, now with inflation that's affecting some of the projects to kind of get a little bit moved out for certain types.

**James Marks:** I feel like Mr. Guy was, was looking at my calendar because so some of that is exactly right that you were talking about with coordination with tribal transportation, coordinating with the Denali Commission. We do have meetings set up for this Friday with some of our other partners like Southeast Conference and Tribal transportation providers, about coordination of projects. We've heard anecdotally that there might be enough funding out there to fix all the tribal bridges, for example. We're trying to figure out how do we coordinate these two programs, the Tribal Transportation Program and also with Denali Commission, I've been talking with them. There is a big coordination piece, especially in rural Alaska. One of the challenges that I'm trying to overcome with a lot of support from the Commissioner's Office is, we don't want this match to be a barrier to entry for especially for rural areas, rural Alaska. Trying to blend some of our programs and work together with Denali Commission so that we can have some of these shared delivery goals or bring more resources to bear is absolutely at the forefront. I welcome any thoughts or feedback about how we can better work with our tribal transportation partners or Denali Commission.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Just so all of you are aware, the other one that's out there is discretionary grant opportunities. Those kind of flip things for us too, in that it's where the money is and what the scoring criteria looks like for those, the notice of funding opportunities we go after. And that may accelerate some projects versus others to. That does get into a little bit with one of our challenges that James was referencing is match on those. We don't have match for those, and a lot of them are 20%. Our current strategy right now is if we're successful, we go for a supplemental and ask for the match. That's not necessarily an ideal spot to be in when you get a successful grant, and that's hopefully, if we get the match to. That's how we're going to move forward. There has been talk about are other ways to manage that match, other ways to fund the match? Then the community piece to, when we have had some

successes. Katherine's had some successes partnering with communities and then kind of sharing match. Katherine, the ferry docks maybe just talk about that for a minute?

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** With the opportunities that are available, the state's limited in the number that we can apply. To the greatest extent possible, we like to partner with communities. An example of that would be the Prince William Sound ferry terminals, like in Cordova. In that instance we had Southeast conference supporting the communities, helping us with the proposal, a lot of the coordination and getting all the letters. The order itself was the one that submitted the proposal. Then the state committed to providing the engineering and project management support to the community and the match. How that all works is kind of a unique situation, tracking the money. But at the end of the day, they're going to get the projects that they really needed for economic vitality in their communities. I think that's an instance where we can continue to partner with whether it's in municipalities, the tribes in the area, and we can find ways to leverage that. As discussed, we can go after more of the discretionary grants.

**Andrew Guy:** I know the commission had a big project, transportation project. Does the state provide a match?

**Commissioner Ryan Anderson:** Denali Commission has always been interesting because one of the things with Denali Commission is the Denali Commission funds could be used as match for our federal highway funds. We're just going through this exercise right now where we must give our match amount for the 2024 budget. So, all the authority that we asked for from the legislature, the federal authority, and then we're going to give you a match amount based on that request.

**Andrew Guy:** Are all state kind of projects, right? I'm asking if the Denali had a project on its own that kind of. It's focused on rural tribal entities. That's the state provider match.

**Commissioner Anderson:** I think commerce has in the past, but I don't think DOT has. Typically, our match pot is based on a certain grouping of projects. When we calculate it and then we make the request to the legislature. So, if that if those weren't in that grouping of projects, we wouldn't necessarily have the accounting for that match. I think that is a struggle with all the monies, the discretionary monies and everything coming to the state. We are hearing more and more about communities looking for match. Because who wants to miss that opportunity to get that kind of return.

**Aves Thompson:** Mr. Chairman, Joe Michelle from the trucking association shared this article with me from the Trucker magazine and the headline says, Fed's Ok Covid 19 Relief Funds for use on roads, bridges, and natural disasters. It looks like there's a pot of money about \$350 billion. Are we tuned in to that?

**Commissioner Anderson:** We're looking at that right now, we're running it down. Those specific funds didn't come to DOT, so we're checking in with the other agencies to see if folks are not expending it. Is there any opportunities there where we could move some to a transportation purpose? Thanks for when you folks forward those on to us.

#### **Item 7: Airport Equipment – Joint use of equipment (Commissioner Anderson)**

**Commissioner Anderson:** This topic has been discussed in the past. Is the board interested in a resolution? I know in the past the discussion was, it would sure be nice to find a way that airport equipment could also be used on the highways for those types of purposes because we have nice equipment there that seems to be underutilized. If we want to go forward with a resolution, what the board would like to say would be important, that this is one of those things where we would be probably seeking out CODEL, the congressional delegation support because it would be a change to FAA ways of doing things. **If that's something you're interested in, we would just go ahead and draft up a resolution for your review for the next meeting.**

**Chair Dan Hall:** Yes. The board supports resolution for Item 7.

#### **Item 8: Winter Road Priorities (Shannon McCarthy, Andy Mills)**

**Shannon McCarthy:** We presented this to you all back in October, since then we did create a survey and we sent that survey out to some distinct groups. We started with our STIP list. This is about 1000 people who are interested in our STIP. It's mayors, city managers, planners, that kind of those kinds of folks. We sent that out and then we kind of

left 2 to 3 weeks in between each group. We sent it to the community councils in Anchorage, the Mat-Su Borough, as well as folks that are involved with AMATS. So all the subcommittees, and just the sidebar, they really did tackle it. They had a meeting and really discussed and as a group kind of came up with a set of recommendations from their group. I think it was the Citizens Advisory Committee on that. Also everyone from FMATS, and then we finally opened it up to public at the end of November. Those are the groups that we went out to. Andy, can you cover what we discovered?

**Andy Mills:** What was driving this conversation was the legislative intent language. I thought for the benefit of the board, I would just share that in the context of the report that we provided. We would just go over some of the sections on what we were looking at and what we came to. Of course, we'd like to hear from the board what their thoughts are about this activity or what we would do in the future.

The road priority Winter Road Prioritization language as was displayed in the FY23 budget language section, did say that the Legislature was looking for us to create and implement a method to solicit input from and consult with. It gave a list of entities and stakeholders they wanted us to work on the creation and revision of the priority list of state-maintained roads. They would like us to coordinate those efforts where appropriate with some of those local stakeholders. We did have a deadline of December 20th, which we did provide, as Shannon was detailing a series of surveys that went out to solicit input on the criteria. We did put together that list of criteria and checking with our M&O chiefs just to get input on. When did we sort of codified this process? How do you use it? It's kind of got the background.

I might skim down this report, which was delivered to the Finance Committee co-chairs and Legislative Finance on December 20th. Just to say that we did do the background you're familiar with, there's priority levels. I did look at some other states and that varies greatly across different jurisdictions as to how they handle prioritization, or if they even do prioritization at all. There certainly are some areas that just show their responsibility area and not a prioritization. That translates to a map which a lot of folks go online and look at their specific area.

One of the fascinating things just to mention in the context of this that I found was the difference between a road priority that is established because of the type of road it is, meaning a major roadway with so much traffic versus a priority where in that area; it's effectively treated as a higher priority because that is their major road. There's kind of two ways that you could look at prioritization, which is on the same scale across the entire state, which is difficult. Or you could say to a local jurisdiction, this is the priority level of those roads and it is more the former than the latter. But it does lead to a lot of confusion by the public looking at these road priorities.

**CURRENT WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE PRIORITY INDICATORS AND DEFINITIONS:**

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4	PRIORITY 5
<p><i>May take up to 12 hours to clear after a winter storm.</i></p> <p>high-volume, high-speed highways, expressways, <i>mi</i> highways, all safety corridors and other major urban and community routes.</p>	<p><i>May take up to 18 hours to clear after a winter storm.</i></p> <p>routes of lesser priority based on traffic volume, speeds and uses. Typically, these are major highways and arterials connecting communities.</p>	<p><i>May take up to 24 hours to clear after a winter storm.</i></p> <p>major local roads or collector roads located in larger urban communities.</p>	<p><i>May take up to 30 hours to clear after a winter storm.</i></p> <p>minor local roads that provide residential or recreational access.</p>	<p>roadways that are designated as "No Winter Maintenance" routes, e.g. Denali Highway or Taylor Highway. Generally cleared only in spring to open road for summer traffic.</p>

The priority system shows the number of hours that it takes to get to some of these roads. Another very common item that we hear about is folks saying you did not get to this priority of road in that amount of time. I think we could do a better job as we go forward with road priorities and trying to display this information better. Again, several places that do not show time frames for when they do it, just the order in which they do it, and that we tried to put time frame here to give an expectation. What folks don't realize is if the snow continues to fall and accumulate, the priority twos and threes may take longer than what's listed even as you're taking care of you prior to one, because the crews must go back and keep those higher priority roads cleared. This is a very common area of constituent engagement

with the department and with the legislators that I speak to, so we want to make that more clear. From the road priority perspective we have principles where we are trying to set the levels to meet. There's schools and emergency responders. We, of course, look for operational efficiencies. You'll see from the information below that different points of view how to set priorities differently.

We did send out three different surveys that were targeted or open to different groups as the intent language asked us to get the different criteria. Everything from the traffic, the amount of traffic that's on a road to where that artery or road goes to and services. It might be a bus route, it might be a public transit route, whereas other routes do not. There are road characteristics where you have certain safety factors that would maybe make a road priority more important to have it higher because the safety considerations at that location. There's so many of these and the local M&O chiefs and operators have a lot of daily input to this and do make modifications in their routing sheet that they pass out to operators responding to microclimates and conditions and what they're hearing from folks. Another issue with setting and establishing a certain road priority is still giving crews flexibility to respond as they need.

If we get down into the actual report conclusions, given just the summary of the surveys we did a weighted system where obviously there were 600, there were quite a few more STIP respondents than there were targeted to the MPOs or the community councils. We weighted those results to help show sort of an even comparison between the three different groups. Where you see green was sort of over a certain threshold, whereas the red was under a certain threshold. I would point out, distance from M&O Station as an operational efficiency. If our crews must travel farther to get to a location that they are at a certain hub, that hub is established given the area to serve, obviously no one from any of these lists thought that was important for establishing a road priority.

I think we completely understand that, that's an operational reality of the department. But that is not something that the public so much thinks should drive this. It's these other factors which completely make sense. Weather events is an obvious factor. If there's areas that can get worse, that perhaps should be a higher priority, alternative routes for emergency vehicles and emergency responders and hospitals ranked extremely high. Obviously, safety is number one for the public, which we hear that all the time and it is a major focus for the department.

The question is, knowing some of this solicited input, how do we use this to then make any potential changes or review the way that we establish road priorities? That's something that the department in reviewing this, is going to look through and make consideration of, because we haven't functionally reviewed the road priorities that are displayed on the GIS map that you hopefully have had an opportunity to look at. It's this road map that you can pull up on our DOT website. That map hasn't been effectively updated substantially, in small ways it's been tweaked, but in the last five years. We would want to go through and do a true up. But at the same time, let's evaluate if this is the best way to communicate those road priorities to the public and what has changed at the department that we need to maybe implement a different way of doing this.

Again, when we get down to what was not necessarily part of our criteria. But the respondents said it was important. We saw an overwhelming input on the pullouts or recreational access as an area that the department wasn't necessarily focusing, but they wanted to see more focus on prioritization of winter maintenance. And then also pedestrian traffic and your non-motorized users or facilities. That was an area they certainly thought the department could put more focus on winter maintenance. There were other interesting criteria in here that we put on there for future consideration as well. Lack of cell service makes some sense where if you can't contact emergency services, you don't want more accidents in that location.

What do we do with this? Well, the intent language as presented didn't come with any resources or funding. This was our department's best attempt to sort of engage in this activity, get some input, and consider what we might do moving forward. We are going to look at the criteria given this activity and talk to our folks. We started this last year. It was great having an M&O summit where we kind of got into maintenance specific conversations. I think that would be a good place to focus on having this conversation. What do we currently do? What do we maybe need to change about that; and how do we then communicate that to the public as far as how our maintenance efforts are out there? The Commissioner had suggested that we maybe even look at some innovative technologies like plow tracking that would give people real time information, see what is possible on that front. Obviously, that's something we would need to look at the available technologies, the associated costs, the implementation effort. I saw some neat stuff using our GIS software that is utilized in the department quite often even for that priority map. So, giving folks an idea of where the plow is and when it it's coming along the route might be very beneficial.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I also like to make a plug for that M&O conference. I think that's a great thing. Our company sponsors that and we donate for. If you ever been, it's really the nuts and bolts of what's going on with snowplowing and remote airports, and all the airport managers come in and it's pretty neat.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, it's popular with airport managers and all the M&O staff for sure. Some of the challenges right now with snow removal, I think for all of you in Anchorage, we've had some challenges this year, so just recognize that. Some of these things with road priorities and whatnot, hopefully we'll work through some of this stuff. I think one of the big ones for us is pedestrians and how you work that when you get these big snowfall events and you got to move snow. Those are on our minds and we're trying to think of ways to do these better. But this year was tough.

**Jon Fuglestad:** Andy mentioned looking into some of these electronic solutions. If you decide to go that way on these locations, these snowplow trucks. The technology is certainly there. I'm sure you guys, we all share certain forms here, you can locate pretty much any asset you have given what you want.

**Shannon McCarthy:** I was hoping to be able to make an announcement today about that. But we are moving forward with a track plow technology and maybe at the next one we can share with you all.

**Chair Dan Hall:** It makes a big difference in planning. Our company; our airplanes have them. You can see wherever they're at flying all over the world, or you can see our tugboats. You can see where our container is with your shipment in it, where it's at in the water. Pretty interesting.

**Shannon McCarthy:** I've been monitoring the chatter because the Municipality of Anchorage does that and it does give, even though there's some still some frustration, it does give people an outlet where they can at least track it and say, I can see that they're getting closer, maybe I'll postpone my trip for a little bit longer or I'll do whatever.

**Aves Thompson:** Hiring people to operate the graders and the snowplows. Is that still a problem?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, it is. Every week we call out to all the districts and we get the vacancy reports because it changes on us from week to week. It's almost like location specific. One area will be fine, and then suddenly, we'll see, you know, four or five, six operators leave and then another area will be okay and then something will happen there. Anchorage, for example, when it came to operators in Anchorage, we seem to do okay on the highway side. On the international airport side, we had to take steps this past fall to give increases just for working at the airport because our superintendents were telling us we're not going to be able to respond to a big storm event with the current vacancies that we have. They laid it out with how they run their teams and where the holes were, and it was clear. And so we did the increases and it, and it took about 30%. We saw it then suddenly and it was before that big storm event with the wind and everything that was when we just started hiring people again. That's what saved our bacon on that because we had some guys.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Just to clarify, 30% on base wage?

**Commissioner Anderson:** 30% on base wage. That was one, we have another called mission critical incentive pay. It's tough for us because it's we must find the budget, right? We don't have legislative authority for it. So, it must be there through vacancies. We have extra money so we can do this, or we ask for supplementals for it. And then, of course, there's a letter of an agreement with the union. There's a process there we must get through. They're not fast. So far, we've done them in Bethel. We've done them out in Nome, in the Western District and Anchorage. Now the one we're looking at right now that we're concerned about is our equipment fleet and the mechanics. And so, we're working on them for that right now.

**Aves Thompson:** Are you finding support from the administration?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, it's just tough because you're in this world of negotiated contracts. Then, of course, our budgets, you know, the legislature must approve the increases. Everyone's aware that we're in this situation. But so far it's been working, we've been keeping things running that way. I've been on some calls where we've had to explain to guys down in Kodiak, for example, why they're not getting it, but these guys in Anchorage are. The way we say it is, you know, this is mission critical. We only do it when we see that we're going to fail. If an airport is getting down in staff so far that we think we're going to reduce service hours because we just can't maintain it, that qualifies. Anchorage International Airport qualifies. The other things that seem to be working, that are different, that I

think are more positive is the 2 on 2 off schedules. So of course, the Dalton was a real great one for us but that's extra money that's that we must ask for more money to do that and then for winter schedule in Fairbanks. They decided two on, two off were better for the staff, and that was something that's been so far working out okay.

**Item 9 Impact of inflation on a project to be built (Amended item due to scheduling conflicts)**  
[Roads and Highways meeting Jan 17 2023.pdf](#)

**Carolyn Morehouse:** The Commissioner asked me to speak about is about inflation and how it has affected our projects. I've gone back and looked at some data, looked at just our engineers estimates and awards, and the differences between that over the last few years. We've been lucky that we've been able to use the AASHTOWare as much as some people hate it, it does provide lots of good data for us. When you start talking about inflation, our bid prices will have all these things. We don't know whether it's materials, labor, fuel costs, rental of machinery, all of that is put into our bid prices. We can only imagine that all these things are affecting us a bit.

This is from AGC, published in 2021, and it shows the steady increase, the change of prices, lumber and plywood are in purple. And we found that our timber was up like 500%, but that just shows over time what they're seeing nationally. We pulled out not every big item, but some big items, because as you guys know, we are sometimes it's lumped, some things are subsidiary. We looked a lot at corrugated steel pipe all the different sizes, load centers, we have mix asphalt, we have some bigger guardrail towards the end. You can see that this is over time, our price increases that we've seen from 2018 and 2023 have increased quite a bit, up 60% for 36 inch and 60-inch pipe. Amazingly, guardrail on some of the bigger pipes were less than what we saw in the past. So, this is just picking out a few items and saying, you know, basic price, what is changing.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Then what we got is looking at the engineer's estimate versus award amount. Our engineers, they try to keep up with things. How is the price going? Is that when they're awarding? A lot of times they were looking at historical prices to base what they think will be the future. And we had some fun with COVID, different things coming up. I think they did a pretty good job; you can see these are all modes. So, these are construction projects. This is M&O task orders for maintenance and airports. This is some of our design support. So, these are all projects and then I'll show you just highways, so it shows you the year. So, I put everything in federal fiscal year, which is October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 31<sup>st</sup>, and then it shows the number of projects that we had total for the year. Then the next one is the number of days it took from advertisement to be awarded, because that's time to and price increases at times. Then the next we had was the number of projects that we had out. Basically what we had for engineer's estimate versus award. You can see from 2019, we have the average is 5.7%, median is 1.2%. So that's pretty good. I mean, we'd like to be within 5%. In 2020 we had our engineer's estimate was almost \$450 Million, but we only awarded 414. So, we were over what things would cost. And then we slip into 2021 which again, we show that our engineer's estimate versus award, was engineer's estimate again was higher than award. But in 2022 and 2023, we're seeing the opposite. So far, this year is really significant. But again, we don't have as many projects. So, this is the first quarter, only five projects. So that's going to skew as the year goes on. Okay, so this one is just the highway side. I pulled out all the aviation facilities projects, all the design support type projects because those are also AASHTOWare. You can see that's just for highway projects. That's really all I had for what the data is showing as far as inflation.

Have we had to do extensions of time? I went back and at the Regional Construction Engineers and only one project in south coast region, they can say being a supply chain issue has extended time. But I know in 2020 anecdotally the construction chiefs were talking about projects they thought would be done in one year, extended to two; which costs more money for doing administration support but no cost on the contractor side. I didn't have the data for how many times the contract has been extended. Hopefully will have that by the end of the week I can share with you all.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Do you guys adjust budgets up so you don't have these funding issues or what do you. I mean, how do you react to what you're seeing?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Well, I mean, they we have had some issues. There's some in the raw data. There's one project that spent 140 days looking for money. Right. So, we have had that issues. I think we have sent out memos to engineers. Remember, inflation is you can't just go past a historical. You have to call around. You must do things differently than the past.

**Chair Dan Hall:** But you're getting funding based on engineer assessment before bid time when it bids and is awarded the money for is substantially different. You've got to justify that. At that point you have to get more money.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Except on aviation.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Yes.

**Kodi Long:** So that's what I was going to ask, because it seems like some of the Western projects. Barging fuel substantial, everything. But you're saying with aviation you don't?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, because the FAA still must have money.

**Kodi Long:** Not you guys, necessarily.

**Chair Dan Hall:** There's an interesting part between the different between the aviation and the highway program. The aviation has got a ton of money in savings. Highway is just broke.

**Aves Thompson:** Can the Fed highways approve that additional money?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, it'll come out of our overall program. It's not extra like from DC, it still comes out of our Alaska program.

**Aves Thompson:** So, it impacts what you can bid, though, if you downstream because the dollars are fixed. Fed Highways makes that decision.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Yes. Right. We will ask them to approve it.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Essentially, we send in all the paperwork. They give us the money for bids. We need more money. We must send them more paperwork and get more money.

**Jason McComas-Roe:** What conclusions do you draw from this? I mean, what I'm wondering about is, are there tools that we can use to do a better job of anticipating these increases and thereby make estimating more accurate?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** That's exactly what we're seeing from this, the need to not just base it on historical price. That there needs to be looking at indices, maybe call around locally in the area to be able to estimate properly. I haven't gone back and look at the five projects that to date the ones that had for this year to see the one that was double. I believe it was a CMGC, which is a little different that you don't have that same design big build type environment. That is what we're again, as we're getting more experience and being able to estimate that properly.

**Kodi Long:** I've heard some projects were designed. Two, three, four years ago. Been on the shelf or whatever. Was that engineer's estimate updated?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Yes, they must be within a certain time.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think that the war in Ukraine costs us a lot of money just in fuel and uncertainty. I mean, look at the asphalt price index over the last year.

**Kodi Long:** What avenues do the engineers have outside of historical tabs to get pricing?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** They'll look at indices, they'll look at even calling locally for materials and then they've done that, larger contingency, just because of the unknowns.

**Chair Dan Hall:** So, we're going to spend more money on projects and get less out of this IJJA money in year one, it looks like.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Well, maybe. The other thing that's going on, James and that crew have some strategies for this August redistribution. And so last year we got about 80 million of extra above and beyond. So that helps with that piece of it. If we continue to have these projects ready and we're in a situation where we can spend money, for some reason a lot of states are still having a hard time. At the end of the year, we want to make sure all that money is spent. Hopefully this year we have another big opportunity for that. That'll help compensate for part of that.

**Jon Fuglestad:** And just as a general comment, you mentioned the wage increase and the union negotiations are up for at least for the laborers and the operators, I think the Teamsters. So, what they're asking it's going to be substantial.

**Andrew Guy:** So, the process you have. Well, those instances where you know. Bid is awarded and the work is being done. Inflation really brings up prices. Do you make up for the difference during the time?

**Carolyn Morehouse:** No. We only with the asphalt price index is the only one we have that we will adjust either upward or downward.

**Andrew Guy:** If that happens, does the contractor have to go into the administrative process to get back money because of the inflation?

**Commissioner Anderson:** No. I mean, we've had a few claims that have been tried, but it's you know, the contract law is tight when it comes to low bid contracts.

**Kodi Long:** Federal highways, you are allowed, right?

**Chair Dan Hall:** Yeah, they do it for certain items. There's probably no good system that's tried everything. How do you do that if it goes up or down. Especially with multiyear projects too. And you're trying to project out to three years. So, I mean my own opinion is the asphalt index is the same way as you're taking a Seattle price, tying it to a Fairbanks price then into an Anchorage price and trying to create this market price for asphalt, it's tough.

**Andrew Guy:** Seems to me that there should be a process to address that. Because it'll ultimately be for the good of the whole.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** Well, anything we do, we do need to get approval from the people paying the bills and they have a very specific process of how we do it. And so, we've been successful only with the asphalt price index. I say with COVID, we tried a couple more, but going to through their regulations, that was not possible.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think we tried fuel through the AGC, no other states do it.

**Carolyn Morehouse:** They do it with state funds if they do it. Because I think Iowa was the big one. Everyone was looking at it and they used state funds for it.

#### **Item 14: Snow plowing/cleanup 2022 (Amended item due to scheduling conflicts)**

**Shannon McCarthy:** I think the last time we had talked about Winter Road priorities and had discussion about the draft resolution that you guys wanted to think about and considerable further. I believe we were asking the question of contracting for these extreme events. I called all three regions, and I have a little bit of background from each region of how things have been handled. In the 2021, 2022 storm up in Fairbanks, we contracted to help with that response, which took about six weeks. The reason why they were able to do that was because it was a Governor declared disaster. They were able to access emergency funds in which we normally are not allowed to do that for weather. It seems like we are always the ones responding to the emergencies, but we don't often get declared an emergency unless it's a fire, flood, or earthquake. They do have a contractor on board for this winter, and the reason why they're able to do that is that they have a high enough vacancy rate that they're saving enough money so they can pay their contractor. They said that they do have to be very careful about how and when they use the contractor because it's about double what the state forces in terms of costs. So, they're reserving it for the class three and four roads so that when there's a big snowfall, they can concentrate on the we know the priority ones and twos and then if they can't get to the threes and fours fast enough, they can use that contractor to bring those roads back up to an acceptable driving condition. That's what's happening in Northern Region.

Here in Central Region they don't have a contractor on board other than the snowfall that obviously we needed to do right after our big storm. So, and in fact that snowstorm was about over a 7-to-10-day period. They started hauling almost immediately after the snow stopped and probably did it over the 4-to-5-week period, maybe even six weeks. They hauled about 100,000 yards in that four-week period just responding to that storm because obviously there wasn't a lot of snow after that. Last year for the 2021, 2022 winter, they hauled a total of 140,000 yards, period. So, we're already almost up to our limit, and it's mid-January. As you guys know, our big storms have usually hit

February, sometimes even as late as March and April. So obviously they used a contractor to do all that snow haul. I've heard that we're running out of snow storage. I need to double check that but you guys might know better than I at this point, but that snow storage is getting a little bit limited.

**Jason McComas-Roe:** You mentioned that you. Have a contractor on board in the northern region. May I ask who that contractor is?

**Shannon McCarthy:** I don't know that off the top of my head. I can find that out for you.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Do you guys feel like the public was happy with the response and things went well?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah. I think any of the resources, everything we can bring on helps out. I don't know if people a lot of times recognize whether it's a contractor or a state piece of equipment out there or not. The struggles are real with just trying to haul snow and there's only so many contractors and equipment. I think that's where some of this just the limited resources out there. We didn't take the emergency approach we just put everybody out there all over time for the Anchorage one. There was not an emergency declared so that does limit us. When you declare emergency, more funds open.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think a lot of confusion happens because people don't know who owns which road and who does that plowing. I'm sure a lot of people in Anchorage are calling DOT and you don't even have the road.

**Commissioner Anderson:** We can do a better job on that to, because there is also some roads that might be DOT roads, but we made a deal with the muni to maintain them; and so there is some of that going on out there that is not as clear as could be.

**Shannon McCarthy:** I just wanted to bring up a third example for Southcoast that they actually have a better vacancy rate than they did last year. They were running a high vacancy rate last year, that's improved. They do hire a contractor to deal with the road to Eaglecrest and they do this because it's actually a priority 3, but the CBJ wants it to be a priority one. So, they pay the additional funding, and they turn around and hire a contractor to supplement it. DOT doesn't have the contractor do all the clearing and plowing but does use it to supplement so that it is considered a priority one for CBJ.

**Commissioner Anderson:** I would say we're doing more contracting in the past two years than we've done ever on the highway side just because we have utilized these contractors up north and then down here with the trucking and everything. I know in the Mat-Su, we're working on some contracting concepts to help. We're working with the borough in that contractors that are under contract to Borough already going to a certain area. Could they also just take the road piece to? We're working on those ideas because we recognize that the vacancy rates are climbing up on us and we've got to deliver service.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think it's great. I don't know how many graders Jon's got sitting around. There are probably 50 graders out here, and they're all sitting in somebody's yard. Andrew, you got a pile to.

**Jon Fuglestad:** We would mobilize crews very quickly to handle anything. We were part of the Fairbanks response last year. I like to see the private sector helping.

**Commissioner Anderson:** And the more we get used to it and the more we do it, I think more you see of it.

**Jon Fuglestad:** It's interesting that we showed up to help there because there was a request came through. We showed up with a whole crew and a bunch of loaders and graders and stuff, and they said they got handled so they turned us down.

**Commissioner Anderson:** That was here?

**Jon Fuglestad:** Yeah. That came through a request. Came through the mayor's office. The public works director said no, thanks.

**Kodi Long:** I wonder if there'd be any value in some sort of, come fall to talk about using GIS or something. If you guys were to say, Hey, here's what's in our area is going to be here through the winter, we have X number of graders,

it's mapped and it would be a resource for DOT to be able to say, Hey, Dan's got four motor graders sitting out there and our guys are 60 miles away.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, I mean, those are super because a lot of times you get in these situations and that's the first question is like who's got what? Some people are proactive and start calling. Those things would be awesome.

**Shannon McCarthy:** And, you know, it is possible that we get into a situation where we have plenty of operators, but we have broken equipment, you know, our mechanics can't keep up. So that is a really good idea.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I like the idea. The hidden gem of this is it keeps you at the department from having to hire this workforce in the winter and then keep them in the Summer. So, if you could balance your workforce and use contractors to fill in your delta, it saves your hiring. It saves you all the way down the stream, equipment, ownership, all these things.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, for sure. Well, we do feel like there's a lot of great contractor folks that are out there in the wintertime that might be available to plow snow, right?

**Chair Dan Hall:** Yeah, absolutely. That's a good point, not many of us don't work in the winter in the business we do anyway.

**Aves Thompson:** How would you approach that? Not our board. Can someone somehow coordinate those resources?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, absolutely. I don't know if there's a board action to take other than maybe a recommendation for DOT to look at a few things related to that. That would be something that could be done and maybe when we do get in these situations, there could be a set of procedures where we would reach out to a certain group of contractors or something that would happen that might be helpful. A lot of times you get into these big storm events and there's a lot you're trying to deal with.

**Jon Fuglestad:** Reaching out with just like a statement of qualifications or something that we could provide.

**Aves Thompson:** I was thinking about that because you said, well, I wonder who's got what right? And if you had that information available you can make a better-informed decision.

**Commissioner Anderson:** The way they've contracted out so far has been low bid; it wasn't necessarily qualifications based. Maybe there's a term type arrangement we should be looking at that would be a little bigger and broader that would go out so you had it for the season.

**Chair Dan Hall:** In the military they do a lot of ID IQ where you bid a million, could be 1000 bid items that could be ten foot of guardrail fix, or putting a sign up, or three inches of pavement, or a grader at X amount an hour. They build task orders based on the need with your rates you give them become low bidder.

**Jason McComas-Roe:** I think it's a great concept for DOT to have the ability to partner with private sector for rapid response. I'm hugely supportive and in favor of that, but I think there's an important reputational component to that. You've got a boatload of critics out there, especially in that kind of a situation. If DOT is going to partner with private sector to get the situation dealt with. You want to make sure you're partnering with somebody that is not going to bring an additional boatload of criticism in your direction because of their local reputation.

**Aves Thompson:** Would it be appropriate to ask Commissioner if they could sketch or draw plan, resolution, or something that the board could encourage you to do some work on that sort of a program?

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think you've got to be careful what you ask for here a little bit. I think the challenge is there's unions and agreements in place and some of that work is what you do. It should be clear in the event of an emergency.

**Commissioner Anderson:** An emergency and also in the event where we don't have enough staff because we've been trying to hire. We're doing the same thing on the Marine Highway System because we don't have the people to run the ships or there's an overhaul or whatever it is that makes them not available. And so, we contract with these private like the catamarans or the smaller barge companies to move people. Because otherwise we can't provide a service.

**Jon Fuglestad:** I think what we're seeing, too, is just more extremes in the weather. So that's necessitates some different thought process, climate change to them. It was Western Alaska with everything, and like Fairbanks last year that you referenced and Anchorage this year. So, it's going to continue.

**Kodi Long:** I like that model just for the simple fact that when the storm does hit, everybody is on their heels. It's a bit of chaos. If it's established prior, it's more of a procedural and much more in control.

**Shannon McCarthy:** I can draft that up with a resolution.

**Commissioner Anderson:** You guys want a resolution of some sort that would kind of talk about on this front?

**Chair Dan Hall:** Yeah. I agree. I would call it storm event. A storm because an emergency might be classified a little different than you're able to use a storm event. Five foot of snow and week is a storm event.

#### **Item 9: Past Resolutions**

**Chair Dan Hall:** If you look at our meeting minutes from our last meeting, we tabled supporting the increased winter maintenance activities because there are some questions, I think that got tabled primarily because the Commissioner was not here and probably the one that could answer some questions. Well, this is supporting decrease winter maintenance activities to all state priority roadways. But there are some questions came up, what was what? And I think you could probably answer them. But what is the state priority roadway? How is that defined? Some of those questions came up.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Think this was the one about operations of maintenance. Funding has decreased since 2016 and that's the budget. This year we got a little bit of a boost on it. Part of this winter maintenance system is how we allocate our resources. You can go online and see whether roads are priority one or two or three or Four or five. It's all based on time that we respond to an event. If you're a priority one road, I think we give ourselves 12 hours that we're out there and after the storm event, within 12 hours it's cleared. It's really that we set an expectation for ourselves based on our resources, that's how quickly we think we can do those things. The other part of that, which is how often do we need to look at those priorities? Because maybe a priority one, somebody is a priority two to somebody else and do we need to get that squared away and just make sure we're constantly looking at that? When you look at increasing maintenance funds, I think it's important that if a board or another entity is wanting to propose that, where do you want to see that rather than just saying, you know, what gets this much more money, would you want to see more where hey, we want to see Dot go after priority ones harder or twos or more resources in a certain area because this is what's important to us versus just that increase overall. I think that was kind of some of thoughts we had talked about before.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Motion to adopt resolution.

Board approves resolution supporting increased winter maintenance activities to all state priority roadways unanimously.

#### **Item 10: Public Input Update**

**Jocelyn Swindel:** At the last meeting we launched public input for the public to have the opportunity to provide comment. We are moving away from that system and are looking at different options for the public. We will keep you informed with new information.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Can we have the Roads and Highways board updated? The links with job descriptions are incorrect or not working.

**Jocelyn Swindel:** That should be an easy fix. So, we'll investigate that.

**Chair Dan Hall:** So, what's your timeline to decide.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Before the next meeting?

**Jocelyn Swindel:** We should have more information before the next meeting, and we can also utilize Facebook in the meantime.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think it's important. I know some of the just from a disaster went on from the hurricane. You know, there was very little public input and a lot of the communities looking for help. And I think the right platform, you know. It would help some of that people.

**Commissioner Anderson:** You know, on the platform piece that might be worth if this group is interested in the next meeting to have on the agenda. Shannon and Katherine are working on our 511 system and making it encompass more like maybe even construction. And then talking about all our highways, our infrastructure out there. That's information based for on the highway system.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think there's a little bit of risk in some of it, like you just talked about, with this system not working, that we're kind of going down the road with having taken the time and making a great decision on technology and not being first sometimes is good.

## **Item 12: Urban / Rural Project Team**

**Commissioner Anderson:** DOT is set up in a couple of different ways. On the maintenance side, every one of that kind of funny shaped boxes is a maintenance district, and it has a superintendent and somebody that's overseeing that geographic area. There's a budget for that geographic area and they're managing that. They have their resources, and they stay pretty contained, although our guys are pretty good about sharing, when something a blower goes down, they're moving it across and doing those kinds of things. It's dynamic in that in that respect.

When you get into the bigger picture of regions, these maintenance districts that are also encompassed into the regions. For example, Northern Region kind of extends it would pull up everything from the YK Delta, then it kind of goes across through here and all the way down into Valdez. Central Region picks this up. When they made a regional boundary shift they took the southeast region and they added the southwest region to it. I think part of it was because they felt like with Southeast the workload could expand.

The way DOT is set up is three regions, Northern, Central, and Southcoast.. Within those regions there is a director. Design, construction, M&O functions report to that director. On the planning side, that has been moving more to a statewide approach, that was about five years ago they started doing that. When you see planning out there, you'll see a lot more. There's still some field offices but they're not reporting to the directors anymore. Planning is looking more modally and looking more across the regions versus region specific.

I think a fair amount is some of the inconsistencies between the regions when it comes like rural projects, some regions do things a little bit different than others. We've talked about these things where how our resource that's allocated, do we in some regions, do they just naturally put more resources to urban areas versus the rural areas or just things like that. Are we sharing the resources? The rural areas are a lot of aviation so each region will have an aviation design group.

One of the challenges for us right now is it's getting harder to attract people in certain areas. Southcoast for example, is getting more difficult to attract engineers in the Juneau area for some reason. Whereas Anchorage seems to still attract people, they get more applicants. Some of the things I hear about even from my boss is why can't we have standards in the rural areas? Do they have to be the same as the standards you use in Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Juneau when you're building a road or doing those things. Which bring up this idea of what if there was just a group that focused on rural Alaska and what would that look like? How could that even work? This was just to be an open discussion about that. Is that an idea that people would be interested or not?

**Chair Dan Hall:** I support the idea because I think the rural piece versus the urban piece is so different in how you communicate within the communities or villages versus a city. I think the way projects are put together and the communication piece could offer some huge value across the department. Whether it be in the state agencies, not only the Department of Transportation, but the others talked about some of these projects, whether it be schools and things and some efficiencies like looking at our building the harbor before you build an airport so you got a place to unload your stuff. A group that ran that would be in the know. What I see on just for our business is we've got a project manager that is managing job on Dowling and managing a job on Sleepmute, which has never been there. The job was bid, put together with no material source, no staging area. You've got three weeks to go figure all this out and it's hard to do that. But somebody that puts together a rural jobs as their obligation. I think it's a whole different game than sitting in Anchorage or Fairbanks or Juneau putting together roundabouts and things.

**Kodi Long:** There'd be huge value there and monetary value to.

**Jon Fuglestad:** Working in Western Alaska I would echo what Dan is saying. We don't have some of those basic things set up to go into and then obviously it gets reflected in the price. Anything that you would do prior to identify these things, the state's going to get pretty much get the economic benefit of it. I do think certainly in the Southcoast Region, some of that would be rural too though. I don't think it's just the Western Alaska necessarily because some of those communities down there are very small. That would probably be part of that geographic area too I would submit.

**Aves Thompson:** Would you put a team in each region?

**Commissioner Anderson:** We've been talking a lot about what a team is and these divisions, these hard lines that are boundaries for us. Is that how we need to operate? And if that's the case, maybe there's a different construct that's maybe a little flatter and a little leaner, but it gets the job done. One thing we've been thinking about you guys hit on is, what is rural Alaska? Because we had that project in a Touchakis and we had to make sure we did community engagement on that in a way that we would do in rural Alaska, because that's what it needed. It was kind of a rural project. That would be one thing to tackle is, what does it mean when you say a team for rural Alaska.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Ryan, I sat through a presentation probably four or five years ago in Fairbanks when you were Director there and you guys had set up a team/group. Maybe explain through what that was; it worked very well.

**Commissioner Anderson:** At DOT, the historical thing was hierarchies, and you have this person, and you have these four people that work for them. If these two people leave, that person always got two people working for them. These projects would drag on and on because somebody leaves. The idea of the team was, you have a pool of resources that you draw from, you have somebody that's good at something and they're perfect fit for this team. That team is there to accomplish something. It's not one person that has 20 projects. It's a team that has a project that they're trying to deliver and then they draw the resources to do that. That's what we did in Northern Region. You take the designers, or the construction and you pool them into that resource that's available. It becomes a challenge in resource management because the people are competing for resources. To me that's better than people that don't have enough to do sometimes, there is some of that. The one thing different I'll say about Northern and the other regions with the rural is we do have that Nome Group and they live there, so they do have that piece that's a little different.

**Board Member:** Is that idea for design, construction, and maintenance, or just design and construction?

**Commissioner Anderson:** It's a good question. Would there be a value to having maintenance as a rural focus versus managed? Also in the geographic regions, I guess that's another one. You saw how the districts kind of run themselves. It's just when they need money, but something happens and they got to get fixed so it's probably set up to be more flexible. The M&O guys are typically flexible.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think the state when they divided it into regions for the purpose of DOT was a bad choice because I think the state has an obligation to do its work. That work varies based on a storm or dollars being spent in Fairbanks, or in Anchorage, and the resources got to go where the work's got to get done and you've got a building full of people in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. You're not always going to be here because there could be more work in Juneau or somebody's got to go do that or they've got to go to Fairbanks and work. Hard to draw a line in the sand in your business.

**Commissioner Anderson:** If the board wanted to put forth a recommendation to DOT. We want to hear more about this. We want you to look at this and put together some scenarios or something of how this could work from your perspective. We could go back and we could start that process. It would be something we take kind of slow as we go through. There may be some things in the statutes and regs that we find that would need to be changed. It would be a project we would go through together and start looking at these things and how it could work.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I think it'd be worth the effort. The board supports unanimously.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Okay, we will take that and run with it.

**Item 13: Project Advertising Schedule & IJA Funding (Deputy Commissioner Keith)**  
[20230117 Roads and Highways KKeith.pdf](#)

**Commissioner Anderson:** Katherine Keith came on as a Change Management Director about a year and a half ago, that's a tough job when you come into DOT and you're supposed to be pushing on change. She did an excellent job. A lot of her focus has been on marine highways, but she has a lot experience in rural Alaska and an excellent project management background and skills. We want to focus on getting things accomplished so I was excited to have her take on the role of Deputy Commissioner.

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** It's a good segue from your last conversation to this one, because a lot of what you're talking about of a structural change to focus on rural or combine groups, that is a lot about organizational change and how we work within DOT and or stakeholders to kind of allow for that in a way. The change in management over the past year I think will really help and that's somewhat of what I was hoping to touch base on this little is kind of what that could look like for us moving forward over the next few years. I spent about the last 20-25 years in Kotzebue. I lived and worked up there so I'm familiar with the logistical challenges in rural Alaska.

I'm excited to work on ways to a more agile and lean environment so that we can get more done with the money that we have with inflation and with the increased federal funding. There's this expectation to get more done and we have four years left of this money, but there's a limited number of everyone here at the table. Somehow, we must get more done with less resources so that's what we've been looking at over the recent months. In this new role for myself as Deputy Commissioner, one of my tasks with the folks that are lucky enough to participate is looking at our processes. Figuring out on all ends of project delivery what we can do to truncate processes, reduce costs where we're not being very efficient and get things done quicker. Where it makes sense and it's practical, we'd like to figure out what our options are. Some of the things that we're using for tools include our tentative advertising list to help everyone see what's going on this year. Then of course, we have our capital budgets for FY24 to let us know what's up ahead. Beyond that we want to balance our strategic investment areas that James Marks had mentioned with getting stuff done right now. Sometimes we can be as strategic as possible but when those disasters hit like the West Coast storm this year, and you don't have the luxury to really plan it out, you must act. Working as a team within budget and with our construction partners and communities really helps us get things done quickly.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to look at our tentative advertising list, this shows you overall the minimum and maximum. The blue is minimum estimates and the red is the maximum estimates. This is when our teams are planning to put projects out for bid. If you want to look at that in a region-by-region basis, if it's helpful, the yellow is Southcoast, red is Northern, and blue is Central. You can see the same distribution of projects, but just more geo-located. The reason this is primarily a workforce conversation, because with workforce shortages in private industry we want to understand; what does this look like, is this even possible with who we have in the state to get this done? How do we need to increase our training so that we can complete the work as we're intending to?

Using our AASHTO software program and the certified payroll that the construction contractors are familiar with, we're able to tell what the percentages of workforce. If I zoom in on one quadrant, you can see that this is our power equipment operators. For every \$100 million that we have out there for work, we need 54,000 hours, and this is 30% of the total. This may not seem that useful, but as you move forward into our advertising list for this year, we can estimate the number of unique workers for the next 12 months that are needed. According to our AASHTO data, depending on how, if it's all at once or if you have the same laborer over sequential projects, but it's about 18,000 workers to do what we have in our tentative advertising list, which is about \$1.4 billion worth of work.

**Jon Fuglestad:** This is state only?

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** Yes, DOT only. That's unique workers. So, like one person on one job now that one person may then go on to do two or three other jobs that year, but that's dedicated individuals.

**Kodi Long:** This is just for tentative, any historical.

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** This is all based on historical data over the last two years using AASHTO ware because we haven't been using certified payroll that long. And just with the caveat that this is all a work in progress. Some of this data, we've worked to clean it up as much as possible. It's intended to give us a way to get, where do we need to be putting our training in? One of the things with the infrastructure bill that is that you can have 100% federal funds through IJA now available for workforce and training. If there are recommendations that we need CDL

training, for example, we have some avenues where we could use federal dollars for that, which wasn't available last year. We could do a lot with this information. We could break it down by region, we could try to break it down by months. We could have a better look at this over time, which would be of greater value than in this graph.

**Chair Dan Hall:** But one thing of value might be by project type, whether it's a mainly paving project or a building project or breaking them out.

**Kodi Long:** I'm wondering if you've seen years, if you can go to a total number of workers based on dollars but do it for trend lines as far as with this new spending compared to the historical.

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** Really, good suggestions. I should mention this is highway only. We have the same data for all types of projects. I just didn't include this. It's just focused on roads and highways. We could have that information for you, and project it over. Program Development has been working on a 12-year planning to try and forecast our construction needs. At least over this next four or five years with the infrastructure bill money, we can target what we know we're expected to do a lot.

The other thing that the Commissioner had mentioned earlier was our strategic investment areas. We talked about the balance between looking ahead with where we're investing and being able to act quickly in the present. This is looking ahead as we talk about projects that we have in the pipeline and how we're spending the money moving forward. There are a lot of state of good repair projects, safety projects, and then with economic vitality, sustainability, and resiliency, there's just a little less of a focus on those. Some of the input that we'll be looking for is, how do we want to set targets for rural Alaska? Do we want to focus on certain areas; or do we want to look at it mostly for projects that are on the waterways? Do we want to have a certain investment strategy for those? This information is baseline and it's just a starting point for us, and it should allow us to be strategic and to help communicate where we're spending the money and why. If there's gaps, we can identify that and then shift gears appropriately.

Where it gets to be fun is if you start looking at this by geography. If you have areas, say, corridors, you're talking about a rural focus right now. A statewide focus, urban, our waterways, ports, harbors, and ice roads. We can look at, are you spending enough money with safety? I find it interesting this dark blue is safety, whereas urban areas or rural areas, we're spending a little bit less on safety than we are on our corridors. And maybe that's where it needs to be. If we want to spend more money in rural areas and safety, we should look at this a second time. If you look at a pie chart here for rural Alaska, we can see there's about 14% of the money is on economic vitality. If we want to invest more, say, in waterways with our ports for freight so we can lower the cost of goods, for example, this would be a good investment area to improve. Other tends to be planning. There are some areas that we need to spend money on that aren't necessarily one specific topic, so most of the other planning efforts, training, programs.

This is kind of an awareness level for all of you and the public listening. The reason for this list is so that we are prepared with the infrastructure bill, discretionary grant opportunities. A lot of our investment strategic investment areas match very well the federal funding requirements. These are things that we need to do to be eligible for funding. We do have our eye on the horizon of discretionary grants. So, we want to increase the money that's available to the state and to our communities by being watchful for this and then being set up to apply for them when they come in. We've had a lot of grants in this last year and we're on the edge of our seat waiting to hear what's going to be successfully rewarded. If you have any questions about our strategy for the IJA in the years ahead, please let us know.

**Chair Dan Hall:** IJA money, does it need to be spent in five years or ten; how does it work?

## BIL-IIJA NOFO Upcoming List

**USDOT Key NOFOs – Updated 1/12** (expected NOFO release dates in parenthesis)

- FTA Bus and Bus Facilities (January 2023)
- FTA Low and No Emission Vehicles (January 2023)
- FHWA Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (Winter 2023)
- FHWA PROTECT Discretionary (Winter/Spring 2023)
- PHMSA Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Program (March-April 2023)
- USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (April 2023)
- FTA Ferry Programs (April 2023)
- FTA TOD Pilot Program (May 2023)
- USDOT Mega/INFRA/Rural (Spring 2023)
- USDOT Thriving Communities (Spring 2023)
- USDOT/FHWA Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (Late Spring 2023)
- FAA FAST-SAF and FAST-Tech (Late Spring/Early Summer 2023)
- FHWA Bridge Investment Program (Summer 2023)
- FRA RCE (Summer 2023)
- FRA CRISI (Fall 2023)
- USDOT SMART (Fall 2023)
- FHWA Culvert AOP (Winter 2023/2024)
- FTA ASAP (No Longer Listed)
- FTA Rail Vehicle Replacement (No Longer Listed)

**Commissioner Anderson:** It would be obligated in the next five because that's the funding programs. Once the money's obligated, depending on the program, typically we're getting through it in 2 to 3. After the five years there would be that continued project work going on in 2 to 3 years after it.

**Chair Dan Hall:** So, you see it's a 7-8-year process?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, for sure, because I mean, we're two years into it and we're barely getting going. I mean, the money we haven't really seen that even spent a lot of the increases yet. We're just starting to know.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Well, the match was in 2023, the operating budget, right?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah, that's when we started it. Then of course, the projects take that much time to get rolling, unless inflation really kills us, we seem to be on this track of sustained project delivery for the next five years, and I think you're going to see that from us. This year we had projects that we had to make choices on, like, okay, we're going to have to let that one slip a couple of months because we have that ability where the projects are ready. Kind of like a shelf, but we're not allowed to call it a shelf with Fed Highways anymore.

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** One last thing that I'd like to mention if it's okay is just talking about the processes with project delivery. I had an opportunity to go to DC and listen to some other states talk about how they're dealing with this ramp up that we're experiencing this big increase in projects with the decline in the workforce. Everyone's really concerned right now of this fear of missing out, or FOMO is what's keeping everybody up at night. You'll see us be more engaged with contractors and consultants to help us with this piece. Working in new ways together means partnering and teaming and working transparently and finding ways that we can think outside the box. I just hope this is the beginning of a conversation that we can have for strategies which you probably have already brought to us before. You guys only did it this way. It would be so much faster. Well, this is stuff that we're looking at now, and I think the time to look at new opportunities is here. We're not the only state dealing with kind of this this crisis of workload and expectation, but we have a lot of ideas on what's possible here. I think it will be exciting over the next few years.

**Commissioner Anderson:** We have another rural planning organization (RPO) that is going to wind up here with the northwest Arctic Borough. That would be our second because we did the one with the Copper Valley folks, and Fairbanks has got a RPO concept now. On the DOT planning side, it's challenging with all the grant opportunities and the planning work that needs to be done to get these programs in order. We're hoping if these rural communities want to step up and say, we want to do that, we think we can get some resources together, we're going to say, okay, let us help you, and we may have some money to fund some of that for you.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Then would that RPO be a vehicle for what Mr. Guy was talking about earlier and trying to leverage.

**Ryan Anderson:** All the funds? Big time. It's huge, but it's it takes it takes some work to get them to get it set up the right people that come together. It's supposed to represent an area and so if you have a lot of tribal governments, how do you put together that board that's going to make decisions for the whole area? That's a challenge for some of these areas, and so we've seen people kind of come together in different ways trying to make that work. It's a powerful thing in that we could let them set the priorities for the region. It's not DOT trying to do this thing where that may not be the region transportation priorities know. We've also had success with groups like the Alaska Municipal League and various groups out there trying to find more resources for grant writing.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Is there a list of grant requests that we're somewhere we could see?

**Commissioner Ryan Anderson:** I think if you look at highways and ferries were up around \$800 Billion for requests that we put in.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Where does that list out.

**Commissioner Anderson:** There is some of it's on the website.

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/02a40551dbc64236b5ff6d6c4c43451a>

**Deputy Commissioner Keith:** James has been putting together a website as a resource for communities that works well with the projects that we recently had for our TAP program. You'll see a list of discretionary grant opportunities and then also a place for communities to submit their projects. Then you can see the grant proposal so the website, I will get for you. This is a good time to bundle projects. In addition to the tentative advertising list, we're working on a GIS based platform for the 2023 construction projects. The reason for that was to be able to see, is this close to a broadband project, is this close to a major housing development, or what's going on with other agencies in that area that we could bundle with.

**Jon Fuglestad:** This may be a little bit off topic when you look at all these things. At what point do they decide whether it's conventional low bid or alternative delivery?

**Commissioner Anderson:** The other thing that's going on right now is the CMGC regs.. We've been working with AGC on it, but if this board wants to weigh in on that, that would be a fine.

**Chair Dan Hall:** I guess I didn't realize it was still traction with the AGC, right?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah. They have a kind of a small working group that's been working through.

**Chair Dan Hall:** You guys want to see that stuff?

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah. All right, we'll write it down as one of the next meetings items.

**Kodi Long:** What type of Flexibility is there if you obligate a project in year one, but you call it a five-year project, is their ways to bend the rules a little bit to where you extend the schedule of a project necessarily?

**Chair Dan Hall:** I know that they got an extension on the broadband on the time. I think they got like ten years instead of five.

**Commissioner Anderson:** My impression is these are so competitive. We're seeing a lot written in about shovel ready. If you if you can show your shovel ready, you seem to have a next leg up.

**Kodi Long:** So obviously that duration or completion time is part of that scoring.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Yeah. We've made it to second rounds or third rounds and that's been the questions that they ask of you is, can you show us how your shovel ready?

**Aves Thompson:** Commissioner, before you go, I'd just like to mention a couple of things that are sort of on my agenda. One is truck parking and Fairbanks's overhaul, and the permit software issue.

**Commissioner Anderson:** We can add the Fairbanks Overhaul to the agenda for the next meeting.

**Jon Fuglestad:** It can impact these projects and you got that many trucks.

**Commissioner Anderson:** And then the truck parking is that and that is the wayside piece is a big deal right now.

**Aves Thompson:** There was some mention of the recreational parking earlier, but you run into a conflict there between the recreational parkers and the truck parkers because the truck parkers are stopped to take the rest, period. You got all the recreational folks revving their engines and the four wheelers. Hopefully there would be some way to work out, some way to segregate the trucks from the recreational parking.

**Commissioner Anderson:** For the next agenda, we will add the overhaul, waysides, and brief update on permit software.

#### **Item 15: Strategic Highways Safety Plan (Tammy Kramer)** [SHSP Brief Overview-2.pdf](#)

**Tammy Kramer:** I am the administrator of the Alaska Highway Safety Office here in Juneau. I'm also the governors Highway Representative for Highway Safety. I have been given the opportunity to take over the Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which is required federally that all states must have one. This is the year that we must update it. A major overhaul every five years needs to be done and we are in that fifth year. Once we have the major overhaul

done, we do look at it yearly to see if it needs to be tweaked at all. This provides strategic direction for the state, local and tribal safety plans. With the IJJA money and there's a lot of money out there for state, local, tribal to apply for if they can say that one of their projects points to the SHSP. That's what the feds are looking for. We try to make the plan as broad as possible so everyone has a chance to apply for all the extra money that's out there currently. This does not have any funds tied to it, is just strictly a planning document. It's like the umbrella plan that all the other DOT plans feed up into. Like Carolyn was talking about the HSP. Matt and I work closely together. His plan must reference the SHSP, my office, the Alaska Highway Safety Office. We have that highway safety plan. It also must reference the SHSP as well as the commercial vehicles, the STIP, and the long-range transportation plan. They all feed up into my plan. The Alaska Highway Safety Office is a grant-based program. When nonprofits put in for a grant for my side of the money, they must reference the SHSP in their grant application as well.

We revamped the vision and mission statement this year. Everyone knows after five years things change and so we wanted to change it up a little bit. Our federal partners, FHWA, was at the table with us and they really liked what we came up with. One of their big recommendations was all surface transportation. Unfortunately, this is the Strategic Highway Safety Plan so we can't use airplanes or ferries. However, we wanted to make sure it was all surface transportation. We also decided that we are going to use the safe system approach.

We also wanted to give a little bit of a brief of who's going to be involved in our updating. We have the executive leadership team, steering committee, emphasis area teams, and we have the state and local stakeholders. Once we met with our steering committee, we did stakeholder meetings in Juneau, Anchorage, Mat-Su, and Fairbanks. We had about 150 participants. We did a couple of presentations and then we put the question out to the stakeholders of what's on your mind, what is important to you for safety, looking at the safe system approach.

The Federal programmers are expected to include the safe system approach in all their planning documents across all modes. Other countries have been using it and it really is proven to work. When we started talking to the stakeholders we presented the emphasis areas, which was the safe vehicle, safe roads, safe speeds, safe road users, and post-crash care. You can see that we combine safe roads and safe speeds. We didn't want to make this plan so large that it wasn't going to do anything. We want to make sure that we can make this plan work and we can see some productivity with it. Under each emphasis areas are what we have called the focus areas.

Take one for example, a large meeting that we just had for the Bumble Road users. We're including bicycles, pedestrians, ATVs, motorcycles, young and older drivers. When we started to work on the emphasis areas of focus areas, we wanted to make sure that we included ATV and motorcycles. The FHWA that was at the table with this said, you're not really going to get any credit for having those in there. I responded, I understand that. But if it's not listed in there, Matt's program and my highway safety program, that really limits if we can fund any projects for ATV and motorcycles. We do know how important those are now, especially with being able to ride the ATVs on the roads. We want to be able to have something for that, for projects, for education as well. This is what we've adopted under each of these focus areas, we have called focus area teams. Basically, those are the people boots on the ground that are going to make this plan work.

We've started holding this area and focus area meetings. We have nine of them to complete, we've had three so far and we're working on the rest of them by the end of February. The steering committee met in September. They established the vision and mission statement. They took a deep dive into the fatality and serious injury data and the targets, and then they went ahead and confirmed the focus of interest areas that they thought were important. That's when we went out to the stakeholders and we presented that and it was across the board unanimous that is what our stakeholders felt were important as well. That's where we're at today. We're just during holding the focus area team meetings. And at that point, what they're doing is they are going to be establishing a list of action items and hopefully having someone that will step up and say, yes, my organization is already doing that so we can take charge on that action item and we can show that we're getting something done.

The next steps, we need to establish an executive committee. The executive committee is usually in other states the department commissioners or division heads so that if we have problems with a say, for instance, say we're having problems with DMV trying to get their participation to help us with one of our action items. I can take that to the executive committee and then Commissioner Anderson can go to their commissioner and say, can you help us out here? Can you find out what the stumbling blocks are to help to make this happen?

Once all the focus areas have come up with their action plans, they will be presenting that to the steering committee. Hopefully, we're having gone to have that late February, beginning of March. They'll review it, hopefully finalize all those plans. Then the work starts of drafting the whole plan. Resubmitting it back to the steering committee and the executive committee just for one final overview. And then we must have our draft plans submitted to FHWA by the end of May of 2023 for approval. They usually take about two months to approve it. Once that plan is approved, our partners FHWA, which is off lecture down here in Juneau, he will sign off on it and then we will go out and we will have a kickoff for this, just to let everyone know that this is what the stakeholders have come up with. This is what we're going to do and hopefully we can get more participation in it as well. The focus area teams at that point, once the plan is finalized, they will be required to meet at least three times throughout the year just to make sure that they're moving forward on their action items that they've chosen to do. It'll be they will report out to the steering committee, they'll report out to myself, which in turn I will report out to the executive committee.

Like I said, this is the first update for this plan that I've been through. I am lucky enough that I have contractors on board with me because there's no way that I could do all of this myself along with running the Highway Safety Office. I have Cambridge Systematics on board with me. They have produced at least 12 other SHSP, so we have Aggregate contracting with us as well. I know that the Municipal League was here in Juneau with us. And in Anchorage, we've had a lot of the tribal communities join us. Law enforcement joined us. Nonprofits have joined us. Municipalities have joined us. I think we've done a pretty good outreach. I think we have a good variety of members on the focus area teams and the office areas but we're always looking for more volunteers.

**Chair Dan Hall:** Some of these presentations from today's meeting will be good for the boards review.

**Jocelyn Swindel:** Yes, I will send you a complete packet.

**Chair Dan Hall:** If anybody has any agenda items, let me know. We can also send out a survey for the next meeting date.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Video recording available:** [Facebook](#)